

**Congressman Darrell E. Issa (CA-49)**

**Statement on H.R. 3687, the Military Land and National Defense Act**

**Hearing before the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation  
Committee on Natural Resources  
April 29, 2014**

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I would like to start by thanking Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva for bringing up my bill H.R. 3687, the “Military Land and National Defense Act,” for consideration. I would also like to thank Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member DeFazio, of the full committee.

The Military LAND Act is a narrow, simple change to existing law that ensures that our federal agencies have the ability to protect land that is crucial for our national security, including the use of active training grounds. The National Historic Preservation Act was implemented decades ago to protect our national treasures. Federal, state, and private landowners alike have been champions of this effort, through the nominations of historical pieces of our past and through efforts to preserve those sites for future generations. Through the cooperation of parties, sites across our nation, including some on military facilities, have successfully been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Unfortunately, there is a small loophole in the existing law that prevents federal landowners from objecting to nominations by third parties and interest groups. Currently, the Department of the Interior has no statutory authority to consider national security concerns or military objections when federal property is nominated by third party groups and the military cannot prevent historical designation of its own land under any circumstance. This small loophole is a critical one because a historic designation could affect the ability of our military to safely and effectively train on their own land. We can be certain that the drafters of the law never intended to put lands essential for military readiness and national security in jeopardy, or list property over the objection of the property owners- in fact, private landowners are explicitly protected from property being listed against their objections. This legislation would allow the military and federal security agencies to declare their objections and prevent an effort that may endanger our military personnel conducting training exercises around the country every day.

This bill will strengthen our ability to protect our nation’s historic sites by providing strong protections against nominations that would undermine our national security interests. Without action, every base facility in the country is at risk of losing complete control over its own land and being subject to unnecessary bureaucratic control that impedes our national

security. This bill will fix this statutory loophole without undermining our tradition of protecting truly historical places.

In closing, thank you again to Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva for bringing this bill before the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation. I look forward to working with you on this important issue.